

Upper Respiratory Infection

The common cold is an infection of the respiratory tract, which includes the throat, nose, airways and lungs.

The symptoms of a cold include:

- Fever up to 102 degrees
- Runny or stuffy nose (often with green or yellow-colored discharge)
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Sneezing
- Fatigue and muscle aches
- Headache

What medicines can I give my child?

There is no cure for the cold, and antibiotics do not work against viruses.

Pain relievers such as acetaminophen, such as Children's Tylenol can help ease the pain of headaches, muscle aches and sore throats as well as treat fevers. Be sure you are giving your child the correct dose according to his or her age and weight.

Nasal sprays and decongestants are not recommended for young children, as they may cause side effects. Cough and cold medicines are not recommended for children, especially those under 2 years of age. There is also little evidence that cough and cold medicines and nasal decongestants are effective in treating children.

To treat a cold, make sure that your child rests and drinks plenty of fluids. You can use a humidifier to help moisten the air in your child's bedroom. This will help with nasal congestion. You can also use a saline nasal spray to thin nasal mucus, and a bulb syringe to suction mucus out of your baby or child's nose.

The best way to prevent colds is to make sure you and your family frequently washes your hands. This will kill the germs that can lead to the cold.

Encourage your child to cough and sneeze into the inside of his or her elbow (rather than into his or her hand). Clean common surfaces such as table and counter tops, your child's toys, door handles and bathroom facilities with anti-bacterial disinfectant. This can help stop the spread of germs.